

the local schools are already very strapped for funds and they cannot afford this expense.

Likewise, the cities are not able to afford the overtime expenses of all the police who are being required and the firemen who are doing the emergency medical services. So I am working on legislation right now that would try to get money into these entities that do not have the cash flow to accept all of these people on an emergency basis, and to do it on an expedited basis here in Congress.

There are, at this time, between 30,000 and 40,000 new students coming into the Texas school systems. This is a huge increase in a very short time. Trying to match the students with the kind of curriculum that has been ongoing in the Texas schools is a challenge. Texas is trying to meet that challenge in the best way for all concerned.

I am hoping Congress will act very quickly to alleviate some of these early problems in getting the funding where it needs to be. For instance, there is no FEMA money for education expenses. So the bill I hope we could pass this week will allow FEMA, through the Department of Education, to immediately start reimbursing the schools for the costs of opening these new schools and the temporary facilities that are being required, including the schoolbooks and school supplies that are being required to help these new students, who are already entering 2 weeks late because Texas schools start the last week of August, sometimes the third week in August.

We need to bring these children in and get them going in an expedited way. I am asking my colleagues to help me pass, on a quick basis, an ability for FEMA to fund education expenses and to waive some laws that will allow them to be placed where they can best be placed without regard to the McKinney Act, just for a temporary time.

This legislation will sunset at the end of this school year, so it will not be permanent. I hope we can pass it on an expedited basis to try to meet the needs of these students and my State, which has been so generous and has offered so much help to these people, which we want to continue to do and we will continue to do. But I want the Federal Government to make it easier on these governmental agencies regarding the expenses incurred by the communities that are doing so much.

We want this to be the model for response to future emergencies, not one where other States look at what has happened in our State and say: Well, if the Federal Government is not going to step up on education expenses and medical care, then it will be difficult to take in future emergency victims. So that is what we are trying to do.

Our hearts go out to all of the people who are affected by this disaster. We are going to do our part. I am hoping Congress will act soon to help us do the right thing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has now used 7 minutes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I yield the floor to my colleague from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Texas for the time.

I join all of us in expressing our condolences and our concerns for what has happened in the New Orleans area. Certainly Senator VITTER's discussions yesterday helped us understand a little better what the situation is there, what the difficulties are, and what our responsibilities are to do something about that as quickly as we possibly can.

We certainly first want to again offer our condolences to the families of those who perished. I support those who continue to live in the hurricane-affected areas.

What we have seen is, obviously, one of the most terrible natural disasters in our Nation's history. We have also seen, fortunately, the generous spirit of our Nation thrive in a time of confusion and loss. The giving nature of the American people has been displayed and continues to be displayed. We should be very proud of that.

I am especially impressed with the people of Wyoming who have opened their hearts and their homes to help the hurricane victims. You never know when someone is going to be in the path of a similar storm.

The objective now, of course, is to get the victims back on their feet, and to provide for their basic needs, to bring some semblance of normalcy to the situation there. This is going to be an ongoing effort. It is going to be ongoing, but it also demands immediate attention. Progress is being made hour by hour, day by day. I think it is a testament to the courage of the people throughout the Gulf Coast. It will take years to rebuild New Orleans and the other areas, but I am confident there will be a thriving economy again in that area.

Over the next few weeks, our Nation will show, once again, why we are the envy of the world. We will prove that no matter what the obstacles are that are before us, we can join together to overcome them, even if it is Mother Nature. The stories of heroism and fortitude will continue to trickle down, but soon, like the water that has destroyed so much, that trickle was evolve into a wave—a wave of construction, a wave of rebirth.

As we showed on that bright September morning 4 years ago, this Nation will rise out of the ashes and rebuild the Gulf Coast. I join my Wyomingites to say we are sorry for what happened, but we look forward to working with you to restore what you have lost.

I am particularly proud of Wyoming's military. We have deployed 72 people in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. We have sent four helicopters with 19 people, two C-130s delivering equipment. We have sent AirVac nurses

and 13 security police from the naval air station. So we are very pleased to be able to help. We need to provide the help.

There are lots of things being talked about. We can talk about tax relief, particularly as it provides relief for those things being given there. TANF, of course, has something to do with education and health care. We can do something about insurance, private insurance, to make that more efficient. Charitable giving is one of the things we can look at to ensure that is as useful as can be. School funding, which has already been mentioned here, is very important, whether it be there or wherever the children are. Medicaid is one area we need to take a strong look at to make sure it is available to everyone who needs it. Certainly, we need to take a look at emergency funding.

There are many items with which we are challenged. They are going to be difficult, but they are there. We can accomplish what we need to do, and that is to help these people in this circumstance. As we do it, however, I hope we remember that, as in the case of our family, when we have emergency needs, we have to look at some other areas to cut back a little bit. As this emergency continues to go on, our life needs to go on. Government needs to go on with its essential services. At the same time, there are some things we are doing in the Government that could be set aside and could, indeed, be changed so that we can offset some of the costs that go into this effort. That will be necessary.

I send our condolences and accept and join with my associates to take on the challenge of dealing with the needs of the people in the Gulf Coast.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under morning business, morning business is now closed.

#### MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR SCIENCE, THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, JUSTICE, AND COMMERCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2862, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2862) making appropriations for Science, the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Lincoln amendment No. 1652, to provide for temporary medicaid disaster relief for survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Dayton amendment No. 1654, to increase funding for Justice Assistance Grants.

Sarbanes amendment No. 1662, to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina with finding new housing.